

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A business method for providing Internet access to users comprises requesting access to the Internet via the public telephone network or other Internet access infrastructure such as DSL, cable, wireless, or dedicated line, presenting a user name and password and then verifying the user name, password, account activation status and account time balance if the account is for a fixed amount of on line time, or date of expiration if the account is for a fixed elapsed time. The system acknowledges user access by identifying the account time balance or expiration date. This is followed by allowing access to the Internet and using the Internet access for a session time of not more than the account time balance or up to the terminal date. After that the access time is disconnected. A new account time balance is calculated if appropriate and the time balance, if any, is communicated to the user.